



TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Town Hall
405 Martin Luther King Jr.
Boulevard
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Legislation Text

File #: [23-0324], Version: 1

Receive the 2023 Library Task Force Final Report and Authorize the Manager to Pursue a Library Funding Agreement with Orange County.

Staff:

Susan Brown, Executive Director
Meeghan Rosen, Assistant Director

Department:

Chapel Hill Public Library

Overview: Staff will present information from the Final Report of the 2023 Library Task Force.

In April 2021, the Chapel Hill Town Council and the Board of County Commissioners jointly created a Library Task Force to study Orange County funding for Chapel Hill Public Library and examine the issue of interoperability between library systems.

Staff are scheduled to present the Task Force's Final Report to the Board of County Commissioners at the Board's 4/18/23 business meeting.



Recommendation(s):

That the Council receive the 2023 Library Task Force Final Report, thank the Library Task Force for their work, and authorize the Town Manager to pursue an agreement with Orange County regarding funding for library services.

Background:

In April 2021, the Board of County Commissioners and the Chapel Hill Town Council jointly approved creation of a Library Task Force to study County funding for Chapel Hill Public Library and examine the cost/benefit of increased interoperability between library systems. The Dispute Settlement Center was hired to act as facilitator to the Task Force.

From January 2022 through February 2023, the Task Force met eight times to explore and discuss both funding and interoperability. Members considered historical information, statewide best practices, different funding formulas, future impacts and expenses of the Southern Branch Library, potential cost/benefit scenarios, and the current systems, services, data, and operations of both the Orange County Public Library and Chapel Hill Public Library.

Based on their work, the Task Force strongly recommends that:

1. The County consider entering an MOU with the Town to fund library services for County residents who live in the Town of Chapel Hill. The MOU would be based on the "Access/Service Provider" model, which calculates the County contribution to the Town by multiplying the percent of County residents who live within the jurisdiction of the Town by the amount that the County budgets for operating expenses at County libraries.
2. Orange County Public Library and Chapel Hill Public library do not pursue any formal efforts toward increased library system interoperability. The Task Force did not find that expanded interoperability would result in significant cost savings or clear benefits to users. The Task Force

recommends that leadership of both libraries continue to communicate and collaborate informally.

Key Issues:

- In 2012, the County and the Town entered into an inter-local agreement regarding library funding and interoperability. That MOU expired in 2017.
- Since 2017, the County has continued to provide annual funding to the Town equal to the amount allocated when the MOU expired, \$568,139.
- The County and the Town have no current Agreement regarding library funding.

Fiscal Impact/Resources: The County contributed \$568,139 to the Town for library operations in FY23. If the Task Force's recommended funding model were enacted, the County would increase funding over a period of five years by \$169,358 / year.



Attachments:

- Resolution
- Draft Staff Presentation
- FCHPL letter to BOCC
- 2023 Library Task Force Final Report
- 2023 Library Task Force Final Report Appendices

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO PURSUE AN AGREEMENT WITH ORANGE COUNTY REGARDING FUNDING FOR LIBRARY SERVICES AND DECLARING THE WORK OF THE LIBRARY TASK FORCE COMPLETE (2023-04-19/R-7)

WHEREAS, the Council has received the Final Report of the Library Task Force; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners has received this same information; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force recommends that the Town and the County enter into an agreement to fund public library services based on a formula that is thoughtful, equitable, and sustainable; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force recommends that Chapel Hill Public Library and Orange County Public Library do not pursue any formal efforts toward increased library system interoperability.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Chapel Hill that the Council thanks the Library Task Force for their recommendations and Final Report and declares the work of the Task Force complete; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council authorizes the Town Manager to pursue an agreement with Orange County regarding funding for library services.

This the 19th day of April 2023.

The Agenda will reflect the text below and/or the motion text will be used during the meeting.

PRESENTER: Susan Brown, Community Arts & Culture Executive Director

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council thanks the Library Task Force for their work, closes the Task Force, and authorizes the Town Manager to pursue an agreement with Orange County regarding funding for library services.